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ABSTRACT

This report addresses the difficulties regional universities, particularly those in rural areas, have in responding to the challenge of providing coordinated business and language education, and describes an approach that exploits the synergistic potential of cooperative study-abroad programs in creating opportunities for integrating business and language studies. First, the report describes the problems of integrating business and language studies at regional universities. Next, a description is provided of a program, developed in 1989 in Madrid (Spain) by the Kentucky Institute for European Studies (KIES), that was designed to address these problems. Finally, the logistical tasks required in planning and executing this type of joint program are discussed. It is noted that the success of the 1989 KIES program illustrates the potential of the university consortium approach to overseas business and language education, and that through this type of mechanism, faculty in these disciplines can craft opportunities for their students that would be impossible to obtain at their individual schools. Appendices include the 1989 KIES Madrid course listing and course descriptions. (GLR)

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ABSTRACT

Responding to the challenge of providing coordinated business and language education can be difficult for regional universities, especially those in rural areas. Divergent faculty interests, shortages of program development resources and the lack of a critical mass of interested students are among the common problems. This paper describes an effort to overcome these problems through an existing statewide consortium, the Kentucky Institute for European Studies. It focuses on the 1989 business and language courses in Madrid, Spain - one of five programs offered by the consortium.

INTRODUCTION

Creating opportunities for integrating business and language studies is a difficult task for faculties at regional universities, especially those serving rural areas. One way to face this challenge is to exploit the synergistic potential of cooperative study abroad programs. This paper describes such an approach. It does so by; 1) describing the problems of integrating business and language studies at regional universities, 2) describing the program developed in Madrid by Kentucky Institute for European Studies (KIES) to address these problems, and 3) discussing some of the logistical tasks required in planning and executing this type of joint program.

I. Problem Definition

The primary difficulty for integrating business and language education in regional universities is the divergence of faculty interests within institutions. Business and language faculty operate within different academic units, with differing teaching and research objectives and different incentive and performance evaluation systems. It can be difficult to find faculty from these disciplines with sufficient mutual interests to support the required collaboration. If such faculty find each other, further problems can arise in generating the necessary administrative support from chairs and deans to support the collaboration. Heavy teaching loads and increased research requirements limit the types of administrative support which can be offered.

A second problem is the lack of resources to support new university-level programs. With tight budgets and increasing internal competition for existing funds, administrators and state higher education officials often find

it difficult to justify the creation of new programs which combine business and language study. This reluctance can be compounded by relatively small enrollment estimates in the early years of such a program, raising questions about the cost effectiveness of the programs at the institutional level.

A final problem is the need for cross disciplinary teaching. Business faculty should be exposed to the process and content of foreign language instruction in order to incorporate the skills and knowledge students gain in these classes into business courses. Foreign language faculty should be exposed to business instruction to identify those aspects of language and cultural instruction that are most relevant to business classes. Faculty from both disciplines should coordinate their efforts to insure that students perceive the integrative value of the two components of their education. This integration can be difficult to achieve when other demands on faculty time are increasing.

Study abroad consortia can address these problems in several ways. First, by definition, they involve faculty from several institutions and disciplines who share a common interest in language and multicultural education. Thus they increase the opportunity for faculty collaboration across disciplines. Second, they recruit students from many institutions, increasing the chances of assembling a critical mass of business/language students. Third, their flexibility allows them to offer courses and programs on an experimental basis. This allows faculty to develop and improve courses while building interest in business/language study among students. Fourth, they provide opportunities for extensive interaction and collaboration between business and language faculty, building the interdisciplinary cooperation upon which successful business/language programs depend. The following section describes the efforts of a specific consortium, KIES, to pursue these objectives

II. Description of the Program

A. Overview of the Kentucky Institute for European Studies

KIES is a consortium formed by six state universities in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, namely, Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Northern Kentucky University, the University of Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, and two private Kentucky colleges, Berea College and Union College. The consortium organizes and coordinates European summer study-abroad programs for college students.

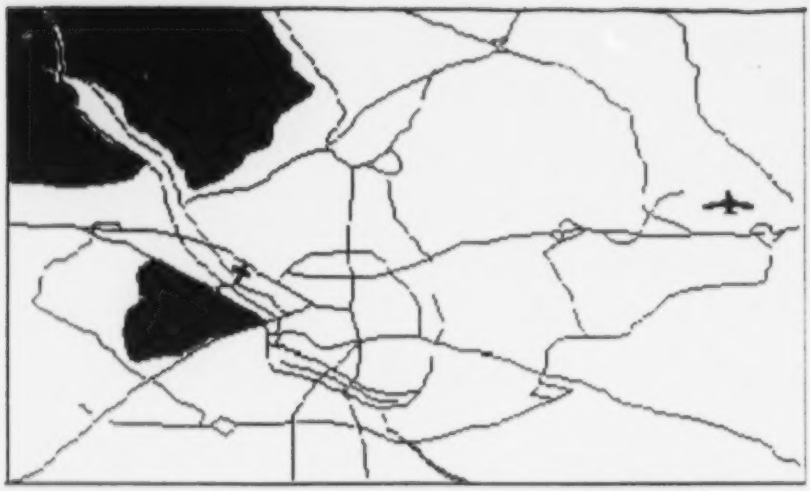
The individual programs started in the following order: 1975, in Bregenz, Austria; 1977, in Paris and Nimes, France; 1979, in Barcelona, Spain, moved in 1980 to Madrid, Spain; 1984, in Florence, Italy; 1988, in Munich, the Federal Republic of Germany; and a program in Salzburg, Austria will begin this year. All programs share the common philosophy of providing strong academic programs in European language and culture and various opportunities for independent learning and travel in Europe. Although all programs stress the learning of a foreign language, they are unique in that they offer non-language courses taught in English. Efforts are made to combine language studies with related fields to better prepare students for world professions. One such effort was started in the summer of 1989 by combining business and language courses in Madrid, Spain.

B. Overview of the Program in Spain

The summer study abroad program in Spain takes place in Madrid, the country's largest city and its capital. Madrid is located in the geographical center of the country with easy access to the surrounding cities and regions. With its approximately 4,000,000 inhabitants, Madrid is a large population center as well as a banking, fashion, services, commercial and administrative center. Many types of light and heavy industries are also located either within or near the city.

SPAIN

Students stay in the Colegio Mayor Marqués de la Ensenada, a private dormitory complex on the campus of the University of Madrid, complete with a dining hall, a dormitory bar (a most effective recruiting tool in dry Kentucky counties), lounges, a theater, basketball and tennis courts, a weight room and a swimming pool. The



X = Colegio Mayor Marqués de la Ensenada

program lasts approximately five weeks. Undergraduate as well as graduate level courses are offered. (See Appendix 1 for course listings from the 1989 program.) Students attend classes four days a week, usually Monday through Thursday. Fridays and weekends are devoted to excursions or free time. Class activities are planned every day to take advantage of the cultural and linguistic opportunities available in Madrid. Some of the group activities include visits to the Prado Museum, the Royal Palace, The Municipal Museum, The Royal Tapestry Factory, the Archaeological Museum, among others. Individual class activities are also planned, such as trips to the theater, visits to factories, firms or organizations. These activities are also open to all students as their class schedules permit. For the group excursions outside of Madrid, the program charters private buses. Some of the places visited in 1989 were Toledo, Avila, Segovia, La Granja de San Ildefonso, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, El Valle de los Caídos, Burgos, and Santo Domingo de Silos. Students who want to travel on their own to other parts of the country also have a four-day free weekend available half way through the program.

C. Business and language courses in Madrid, 1989

The first program offering of business language courses was in the summer of 1988 when Spanish 311: Business Spanish, was started. The success of the course prompted the addition in 1989 of three business courses, Marketing 360: Principles of Marketing, Marketing 568: International Marketing, and OAD 515: Seminar in International Business Communication. (See Appendix 2 for catalog descriptions of these courses.) To go along with the language and business education program a series of activities are planned each year. These include; 1) class visits to selected companies (both U.S. and foreign based); 2) class visits to operating offices of

the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service; 3) field trips to observe selected business practices (i.e. retailing, advertising, central markets); and 4) economic, political, and cultural research on Spain both prior to and during classes. (KIES Summer 1989 Program, program brochure)

Business students must enroll in one business course and also in language and cultural courses. Non-business students are encouraged to enroll in the language business course.

D. Coordinating class assignments, schedules, speakers and field trips

Every year an orientation for KIES faculty who are teaching abroad is held early in the Spring at Murray State University. The selected faculty come from the different universities within the statewide consortium. Then, the language and business education faculty get together with other language faculty and the director of the program to coordinate class assignments and schedules. An effort is made to schedule language and business education classes early in the morning and in the afternoon at different class times. A typical schedule reads as follows:

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. -- Business Spanish

10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. -- Principles of Marketing

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. -- International Marketing

This type of schedule leaves enough flexibility to include class visits and field trips before the 2:45 p.m. lunch time at the Colegio Mayor.

At this point in the orientation an estimate is made of the number of field trips that would be appropriate for the four-week schedule of classes and of the number of guest speakers to visit classes. Soon after the orientation faculty initiate correspondence with selected U.S. and Spanish organizations concerning the possibility of scheduling field trips to visit their facilities in Madrid. Guest speakers are requested when a visit to the organization may not be possible.

III. Cultivating Relationships with Organizations to Visit

A. Arranging visits prior to departure

Perhaps the most significant opportunity offered by study abroad consortia to business/language educators is the opportunity to visit overseas firms and interact with their executives. It can also be the most arduous and time-consuming part of preparation for overseas courses. The difficulties lie in identifying organizations to visit, contacting their representatives, scheduling visits during the program, and coordinating visits with classroom activities, all through the media of telephone, telex, facsimile transmission and international mail. The following systematic process for achieving these ends should begin well in advance of the departure date.

Among the first calls to make is one to the appropriate country desk officer of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service in the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. This desk officer is the primary domestic contact of the ITA for firms or persons seeking information about their country of specialization. While the desk officer may be able to mention firms for potential visits, he or she will consistently be able to provide the names and addresses of contacts for the US&FCS field officers in the country and the appropriate Chamber of Commerce (the Spanish-American CoC in Spain, for example). These are very important contacts in the host country for two reasons. First, they are potential organizations to visit. They can provide information to students on support mechanisms for US firms in the host country (US&FCS) as well as host country firms seeking to enter the US market (Chamber of Commerce). Second, the representatives of these organizations might well have personal contacts in firms that would willing to entertain class visits.

Additional efforts to identify willing firms in the host country should begin with the program director and/or other faculty experienced in the study abroad program. Often these people will have personal contacts with local companies. These visits can be particularly valuable because the representatives have greater awareness of the program and its objectives than an unfamiliar firm might. This method might also provide access to smaller firms, offering balance to the visitation itinerary.

Domestic sources on information on foreign companies include both print and online electronic resources. Dun and Bradstreet's Principal International Businesses contains information on over 50,000 firms in 133 countries. Faculty can use it to identify firms in the cities convenient to their overseas location. The "Big Six" public accounting firms are also promising contacts. With offices all over the world, these firms offer as part of

their services support for US firms wishing to enter foreign markets. This makes them an invaluable source of information on those markets. It also creates the opportunity to schedule a visit in the host country through a domestic contact.

Among electronic online sources, one of the best is the DIALOG Information Services network. It contains several electronic databases which offer information on foreign firms. The most general is D&B's International Market Identifiers, which contains information on over 200,000 businesses in 90 countries. More specific DIALOG databases include Kompass Europe (210,000 businesses in Europe), Kompass UK (110,000 British Companies), the ICC British company Directory, and the Hoppenstedt Directory of German Companies. These sources will provide address, telephone number, fax and telex numbers for the firms they cover. They also provide information on the names of officers of the companies. When possible, the Public Relations executive should be identified. If no name is given for this position, a letter to this title at the address of corporate headquarters is the best approach. Care should be taken to identify a specific contact person at the firm as early in the process as possible. All subsequent correspondence and discussion should flow to this person. In addition, the failure rate on this kind of "cold calling" is high. Faculty should plan on contacting seven to ten firms to land one or two visitations. For this reason, several firms should be contacted simultaneously to afford maximum flexibility in class scheduling. However agreements are made prior to departure, faculty should call all contact persons as soon as possible upon arrival to confirm appointments, check transportation arrangements and inform the firm of the number of persons in the visiting group.

B. Arranging visits on-site

One of the advantages of teaching business and language courses in a large capital city like Madrid is the availability of firms to contact. The city phone directories and especially the locally published city guides, such as the Guía Urbana de Madrid, provide you with the necessary information to schedule visits to local companies or firms, to observe business practices, and to find your way around.

Within a few blocks of the Plaza Mayor, students can observe a range of retail operations including the weekly Rastro, central food markets, small traditional family stores, huge hypermarkets and sophisticated specialty shops. Other field trips that can be easily arranged are visits to the Stock Exchange; the central Post Office; the local and foreign Chambers of Commerce; foreign embassies; broadcasting studios, such as the grounds of Radio

Televisión Española; newspapers, such as El País, and the official factories such as the Royal Tapestry Factory or the National Tobacco Factory. Also, local breweries or wineries make excellent places to visit.

Staying in a private dormitory on the campus of the University of Madrid provides also several advantages. Personal contacts and associations are made with the directors and instructors of other U.S. summer programs or with the local university instructors or students. Information about places to visit is circulated freely. It is not rare for several programs to group together for common visits to certain business firms, especially for economic reasons.

C. U.S. or local national firms?

To provide for a balanced business and language education program it is best to contact both U.S. and local national firms. By including visits to both types of firms, students get invaluable field insights and information related to international business, to the Spanish market and its relationship with the U.S. market, to careers in international business. It is usually more expedient to contact the offices of a U.S. firm abroad because a visit can be arranged more quickly, and there is a lack of language barrier for those students with minimal language background. Visits to Spanish firms take more time to arrange but the advantages are obvious. With an interpreter always at hand, students get exposed to the way business Spanish is spoken at normal speeds, and they experience some of the culturally different practices of Spanish business, such as the importance of developing a personal relationship before doing business, the different concept of time, etc.

IV. Preparing for Integrated Overseas Courses

A month and a half before departure for Spain, the KIES instructors finalize their correspondence to schedule field trips and guest speakers with the selected U.S. and Spanish organizations abroad. Tentative dates for the visits are set or arrangements are made on how to get in touch with the organizations once in Madrid.

On the week of arrival in Madrid, contacts are made by phone with the selected organizations to finalize the visits. Sometimes it is difficult to reach the appropriate contact person in the organization because of the way business phones are operated in Spain. It is not uncommon to get a busy signal for hours or to be placed

on hold and be told later to call two or three days later. Patience is the rule of the game. The visits are eventually made.

At times, language and business education classes have to be rescheduled in the afternoon to accommodate the rigid visiting hours some of the companies have. In cases where the scheduled visit conflicts with another language class the students are taking, the particular faculty member is contacted with the aim of combining resources and efforts. If appropriate, the classes may then be combined for a united visit to the firm in question or the business students are given permission for missing the language class or part of the class to participate in the visit. When possible, inexpensive means of transportation, such as public busses or the subway are used to get to and from the visiting sites. When time is a factor, the group can also travel by taxi, usually four students per taxi, for a reasonable price.

Obviously, the coordination of program activities, the logistics of transportation and scheduling can be demanding. However, the resulting class experiences contribute immensely to the value of business and language education in study abroad programs.

V. Conclusions

The success of the 1989 KIES Madrid program illustrates the potential of the university consortium approach to overseas business and language education. Through this type of mechanism, faculty in these disciplines can craft opportunities for their students impossible to obtain at their individual schools.

What makes our program unique is the unusual cooperation which exists among the faculty members of different regional universities in Kentucky which have pulled their resources and efforts together to create a successful business and language education abroad program.

APPENDIX 1: 1989 KIES MADRID COURSE LISTING

A. Language Courses

SPA 105: Introduction to Hispanic Culture

SPA 110: Basic Conversational Spanish

SPA 210: Intermediate Conversational Spanish

SPA 303: Spanish Culture and Civilization

SPA 311: Business Spanish

SPA 430: Advanced Conversation and Composition

SPA 521 Topics in Spanish Literature; Contemporary Spanish Theater

SPA 551: Directed Study I

B. Non-language Courses

HIS 390: Special Topics in History; The Spanish Civil War

HIS 590: Directed Studies; The Spanish Civil War

ART 121: Introduction to Art

ART 333: Painting

MKT 360: Principles of Marketing

MKT 568: International Marketing

MKT 515: Seminar in International Business Communication

Source: KIES Summer 1989 Program, Program brochure.

APPENDIX 2: 1989 KIES MADRID BUSINESS AND LANGUAGE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SPA 311: Business Spanish. Three hours.

Designed for students with an interest in international business who have at least two years of college Spanish or equivalent. The course integrates oral and written business communications, with an emphasis on the vocabulary of business in the Spanish-speaking world.

MKT 360: Principles of Marketing. Three hours.

An integrated study of the interrelationships of marketing to the other primary functions of business through an analytical survey of the problems relating to product planning, pricing, promotion, channels of distribution and legislation affecting marketing activity encountered in distributing goods and services to markets. Special attention will be given to international marketing, with a focus on Western Europe.

MKT 568: International Marketing. Three hours.

International marketing approaches the subject from a broad conceptual viewpoint incorporating the marketing concept as implemented by multinational firms. Because differences in marketing from country to country are less conceptual than environmental, analysis of European markets and the development of marketing strategies for them will be emphasized.

OAD 515: Seminar in International Business Communication. Three hours.

This course is designed to acquaint the student with the unique problems of business communication in a cross-cultural context. Emphasis will be given to West European countries.

Source: KIES Summer 1989 Program, Program brochure.